



TheConsultants-E
online training and development consultancy

Newsletter



mLEARNING FOR DUMMIES **March 2011**

You've probably heard the word mLearning by now. But you may not yet be completely clear about what it actually means! This issue of Teaching with Technology aims to help explain mLearning. So, let's start at the beginning...

1. What is mLearning ?

mLearning is short for mobile learning. It is also known as handheld learning. The one thing that mLearning does not mean is learning only with mobile phones. Although handheld devices include mobile phones, mLearning refers to learning with *any* handheld device. These include e- readers (such as the Kindle), MP3 or MP4 players (such as the iPod), tablet computers (such as the iPad), and even handheld gaming consoles such as the Nintendo DS or the Sony PSP (PlayStation portable).

2. Why is mLearning important?

Almost everyone has a mobile phone. Even in so-called developing countries, people are usually much more likely to have access to a mobile phone than to a computer. And these mobile phones are increasingly likely to be smart phones– basically mini computers in the palm of your hand. Smart phones have a myriad of functions including camera and video, voice recorders, as well as access to the Internet. Smart phones are increasingly ubiquitous in all contexts, and your learners are increasingly likely to come to class with one. If not today, then tomorrow. Given just how widespread handheld devices are, it makes sense for educators to be using these powerful tools with their learners, both inside and outside the classroom.

3. Who is using mLearning in their teaching?

Lots of people. There are many projects with handheld learning in mainstream education, in both developed and developing nations. In the EFL world, things have been a little slower off the mark, but ELT publishers are waking up to the huge potential of mobile learning. See point 5 below for where you can find out more about mobile projects.

4. How can I get started?

The simplest way to get started is simply to tell your (smart phone owning) students about the apps that they could use out of class to support their own learning. See the final point 5 for some links to ELT related app reviews.





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5. Where can I find out more?

- Check out the links to mobile learning blogs and publications [here](#).
- Read this mLearning 1 to 10 [blog series](#) for a more in-depth look at mLearning, including case studies and projects, and app reviews.
- Take a look at two mLearning teacher training courses specially developed for EFL teachers:

[mLearning: an introduction](#): A free seven day course Nicky ran for SEETA in February 2011, which is open to anyone.

[mLearning in Practice](#): Our in-depth six week 30-hour course on mLearning for EFL practitioners. Look at these helpful [insights](#) from participants on our January 2011 mLearning course (on Wall wisher).
- mLearning lesson plans: We are developing a repository of mLearning lesson plans for EFL teachers, to be launched in the coming weeks. Keep your eye on our website, for some great ideas about how to start using mobile and handheld learning with your own classes!

We hope you enjoy exploring the new and exciting world of mLearning. It's not the future of teaching. It's here with us already!

